

County hit by cuts in child abuse funds

Oakland County will feel a share of the across-the-board cuts in more than 100 child-abuse-prevention programs throughout Michigan just announced by David C. Mills, executive director of the Children's Trust Fund for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

The cuts were made necessary by a reduction in federal money received through the Department of Health and Human Services.

This action is taken most reluctantly. We have explored many other options and tried to deal with the cut without reducing grants. Unfortunately, we are left with no viable alternative," said Mills.

First word of the possible cuts came in October when CTF received notification of a 62 percent reduction in a challenge grant which had in past years been awarded by federal legislation to all states with Children's Trust Funds for child-abuse-prevention activities.

Michigan's grant in past years has been \$496,000. This year it was cut to \$190,000. Since the notification in October, CTF has pursued all avenues to appeal the cut, but none of these efforts have been successful. Therefore, the CTF board was forced to reduce all grants for the current year by 21.66 percent.

Included in the groups that will receive cuts are local child-abuse-prevention councils in 67 Michigan counties as well as these programs

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which are providing child-abuse-prevention services.

Local programs include: Association for Retarded Citizens/Oakland County, Common Ground, Oakland Community Human Services, Inc., Mercy Hospital & Health Services of Detroit, YMCA of North Oakland County-Pontiac Branch, YNCA-Sexual Assault Program.

"These cuts will definitely hurt our ability to provide critical child-abuse-prevention programs in Michigan. And, in addition, this puts a great deal more pressure on our need to increase the amount of money we raise through the CTF check-off. To date, we have never had more than 7 percent of eligible taxpayers donate," said Mills.

CTF is an independent, non-profit agency established in 1982 as a permanent source of funding for local programs throughout the state that help to prevent child abuse and neglect. The majority of support for CTF comes from check-off donations from the Michigan income tax return.

Senate tied up over asbestos

By Tim Richard
staff writer

The state Senate is tied in knots over bills to keep asbestos inspectors on the job.

Deadlocked senators this week will try again to pass the bills amid charges that Michigan's asbestos removal rules are too strict.

"The state shouldn't have higher standards than the federal government," complained Sen. John Schwarz, R-Battle Creek. He tried to amend the package to lower Michigan's standards to the federal level — an amendment that would have thrown the bills into a time-consuming conference committee.

Schwarz was joined by Senate majority leader John Engler, R-Mount Pleasant, whose gubernatorial campaign will emphasize deregulation of business.

They were opposed by Fred Dillingham, R-Powdermill, who was guiding the bills through floor debate. The bills would impose 1 percent fees on asbestos removal contractors to pay for the Public Health Department's inspection program.

"We're tying up this package and eliminating the inspectors," said Dillingham, whose Senate Human Resources Committee reported out the bills.

"We're going to have no one out there protecting the public for three or four months. To tie-bar (Schwarz's amendment) to the fee bill destroys the whole package," Dillingham argued.

REPLIED SCHWARZ, a physician and surgeon: "It's irresponsible for the state to rush pell-mell into a situation."

Much asbestos insulation, he said, "is not deleterious to the lungs. We are developing a cottage industry — asbestos removal — because there's so much government money in it."

"Over 99 percent of asbestos does not contain cancer-causing compounds. It's time for us to back off this thing and not throw away millions of dollars."

Added Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville: "The federal government has a screwball rule that is wasteful of money and health."

SCHWARZ'S AMENDMENT was adopted, but Dillingham won 16-15 approval of a procedural move to send the package to the Appropriations Committee.

Supporting Dillingham were Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, Richard Fessler, R-Commerce, and George Z. Hart, D-Deerborn.

Supporting Schwarz were Doug

Cruce, R-Troy, and Geake. William Faust, D-Westland, and Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, had excused absences.

The package included House Bills 4222 through 4226. "These fees would raise about \$500,000," Dillingham said. "Six asbestos inspectors

are due to be laid off Feb. 1.

"The whole budget is predicated on passage of these fee bills."

"Hopefully, the (asbestos removal) contractors will talk to the senators and tell them how important the inspectors are. We're not going to stop the removal of asbestos."

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